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THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.¹

FOR ten years prior to the outbreak of the war of the American Revolution a battle of words—a conflict of ideas—went on, both in England and in America, between the supporters and the opponents of the colonial cause. The controversy was maintained over the question what in reality were the constitutional relations existing between Great Britain and her American dependencies, and what, in view of those relations, was the policy proper to be followed at the crisis. After the opening of the war and the Declaration of Independence the debate over constitutional questions closed, and the literature which proceeded from the Americans assumed mainly the forms of satire, of exhortations in prose and verse to energy and steadfastness in the conflict, of narratives of experience in field, camp and prison, of efforts at a reflective or historical reproduction of the events of the struggle. But the subject-matter of the literature, both before and after 1776, was mainly political and historical: it embodied the contemporary record of a great conflict, and contained the only permanent and abiding expression of the emotions to which that conflict gave rise. What was true of the American Revolution must be true in the case of any other similar movement. The subject-matter, then, of Professor Tyler's work takes it out of the category of mere histories of literature, and gives to it a peculiar value as a contribution to the political history of the period of which it treats. The criticism of style, the exposition of the æsthetic side of the literary product of those times, has occupied a secondary place in the mind and purpose of the author. His attention has been chiefly directed to the burden of thought which the writers of the time were seeking to express, and to the ascertainment of their position amid the stirring events of the period.

¹ The Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763-83. By Moses Coit Tyler. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897.—Two vols., pp. 521, 527.

And yet Professor Tyler has not produced what would be distinctively called a history of the political ideas of the American Revolution. By excluding from treatment the correspondence and the state papers of the period, he has omitted much that would have been of value for a purpose such as that. He has also included much that would have little or no significance for the historian of purely political literature and ideas. His effort apparently has been to survey the entire product of the individual minds of that period, so far as it assumed definite literary form or was in bulk such that it could be conveniently treated in a two-volume work. By pursuing this middle course, the writer has preserved his consistency and individuality as an historian of literature, though the message which his authors uttered was chiefly political. The work is thus unique in plan, as well as original in material, and occupies within its sphere a position of unapproached excellence.

A feature of this work which is conspicuous alike for its novelty and its value is the space which is devoted to the arguments of the loyalists and the effort which is made to state their position fairly and fully, both as it was before and as it was after the beginning of the war. Nothing approximating in excellence to Professor Tyler's treatment has hitherto appeared in American historical literature. His work may be regarded as heralding the approach of the time when a more just and scientific view of the Revolution will be possible than has ever yet been expressed in historical writing. In this book justice may be said to have been done to the ideas of the loyalists, so far as it is possible to do it by a discussion of literature alone. As fair and dispassionate treatment is given to the writings of Galloway, Leonard, Seabury, Hutchinson, Stansbury and Odell as to those of Otis, the Adamses, Paine or Freneau. In addition, a chapter is devoted to a discussion of the strength and composition of the party and of the views which it held concerning both virtual representation in Parliament and the extent of the lawful power which that body possessed over the colonies.

It is asserted and proved that the loyalists saw the need of a better definition of the constitutional relations existing between the colonies and the mother country and demanded reforms; but that they were willing to seek these only through peaceful measures, never by revolt and separation. The analogy between the attitude of the patriot party and that of the nullifiers in later American history is seen and expressed. In both cases it was extreme sensitiveness, the anticipation rather than the actual experience of evils, which led to threats and measures of revolt. The fact of the case is that the American leaders, as soon as they awoke to a realizing sense of the power which lay at the centre of the old constitution of the British Empire, demanded a new constitution, one in which Parliament by solemn agreement and enactment should set a definite limit to the exercise of its powers. But in their argument and in their acts they ignored the fact that Parliament had never set any such limit, and they conducted themselves as if they were already living under the new constitution which they desired. Hence arose the revolutionary character of their argument, as it appears in the pages of these volumes and in the originals from which the extracts here presented are taken. For that reason, as others have remarked, it does not fit the case : it was meant for a constitution other than the one which actually existed. The loyalists were the party who discussed the issues on the basis of the existing constitution, and were therefore the constitutionalists of the time. It would, therefore, seem necessarily to follow that an understanding of what the old constitution was, whether good or bad, and of the attitude which the loyalists held toward it and toward the demands of their opponents, would be an absolute prerequisite for an historical treatment of the colonial revolt. One of the great merits of Professor Tyler's work is the fact that to some extent it shows how this result may be attained. As the historian of literature deals with opinions rather than with the decisive play of social and political forces — with the utterances of individuals, and these often isolated, rather than with the declarations and acts of responsible bodies, he cannot fairly be expected to fur-

nish the means of reaching a definitive judgment concerning any such movement. But so far as the materials necessary to the formation of such a judgment lay within the scope of his plan Professor Tyler has made effective use of them.

To his treatment of the Declaration of Independence, however, some exception may perhaps be taken, and that on the ground of its inconsistency with the trend of opinion revealed elsewhere in his work. He admits in volume one, page 307, the validity of the doctrine of virtual representation. He says that "the historic meaning of the word representation . . . seemed fairly to justify the loyalist contention that the several organized British communities in America, as an integral part of the British Empire, were to all intents and purposes represented in the British Parliament. . . ." When speaking of the taxation of the colonies by Parliament (I, 310), he draws from the doctrine of virtual representation the logical conclusion. "It was then a question," says he, "of British constitutional law. Upon that question, which of the two parties was in the right? Is it now possible to doubt that it was the Tories?" Further, when treating of the third volume of Hutchinson's *History of Massachusetts*, he says (II, 407): "It is much to his praise to say that, throughout this third volume, the prevailing tone is calm, moderate, just, with only occasional efforts at pleading his own cause, with only occasional flickerings of personal or political animosity." It is believed that these quotations fairly represent Professor Tyler's views concerning the points upon which they touch.

But when he comes to discuss the Declaration of Independence, he pursues a line of thought which it is difficult to harmonize with the statements just quoted. Though he uses language which is measured and cautious, though he qualifies and softens the meaning of terms, yet he clearly holds that the two central charges urged against the British government in the Declaration were true (I, 510, *et seq.*). The first of these charges was that the various acts of Parliament of which the colonists complained were in design tyrannical, because they revealed a somewhat systematic plan to take

away a part of the property of the American people without their consent. But, if the doctrine of virtual representation was true, how can it be said that any part of their property was to be taken without their consent? According to that view, their consent was presupposed, and that was the end of it. As there is no proof that Parliament intended to take oppressively large amounts, its policy could not, on the basis of that theory, be regarded as tyrannical. Had Professor Tyler insisted that, when applied to the colonies, the theory of virtual representation broke down, Jefferson's conclusion might have been approved with a greater appearance of consistency. But the two positions which he has chosen it seems impossible for him to maintain.

The second charge contained in the Declaration was that George III, because he was mainly responsible for the policy of taxing the colonies, was a tyrant. This seems to win more hearty approval from the author than does the previous count in the indictment. But, instead of adducing positive evidence on the subject, he contents himself with quoting the opinions of three English historians, two of whom were of well-known Liberal sympathies. With all due respect for authority, it must be said that the judgments of these historians on the American question cannot be accepted as conclusive, for a reason which will be stated later in this paper. Moreover, if Parliament intended only a moderate exercise of its constitutional powers in taxing the colonies and regulating their trade, the same thing must have been true of the king. Parliament and king were acting together and, at the outset at least, kept properly within their constitutional powers.

When the controversy with the colonies began, George III. in British politics was asserting the latent power of the prerogative against certain groups of Whig politicians who had controlled affairs for nearly half a century. It was the last effort of the kingship to recover its ancient place in the constitution, and its patronage was used unscrupulously and to the fullest extent to break down a long-established majority in Parliament. But for twenty years Walpole, as premier, had

controlled king and Parliament, and had maintained a system of personal rule. The king imitated this policy, as he had to do in order to attain the end at which he aimed, and as he might do consistently with law and established custom. The end which the king sought was to control ministry and Parliament. That, owing to the hereditary nature of the kingly office, this tended to unsettle relations and to destroy the balance of power within the constitution, is undoubted. It was a step backward rather than forward. But, because the policy of procuring a revenue by Parliamentary taxation of the colonies was adopted while the king was engaged in his efforts to secure control of Parliament, it is argued that the policy was the result of those efforts and of their success—that the two lines of action were related as cause and effect. This view underlies to an extent the indictments of the king in the Declaration of Independence. Otherwise it would have been impossible to regard the king as in this matter especially tyrannical. But it is certain that such causal connection between the two lines of policy as has been affirmed has never been demonstrated. To be sure, in its later stages, when the colonial policy had occasioned resistance and that had developed into war, the king proved to be more stubborn than some of the ministers in his adherence to the course which had been adopted. It is true that the war finally became the king's war, but from that it does not follow that the inception of the policy, or its development till the beginning of hostilities, was due more to the king than to responsible leaders in Parliament. Grenville, Townshend, Bedford, Halifax were Whigs, or had received their official training under Whig ministries. They were the men who initiated the colonial policy of this reign. The Sugar Act and the Stamp Act were to their minds the necessary means of procuring a revenue with which to provide salaries for the imperial officials in the colonies and to establish a military force there. The creation within the colonies of executives which, so far as possible, should be independent of the dictation of the assemblies; the development of machinery there which should be adequate to the enforcement

of the acts of trade; the improvement of the system of defense by the establishment within the colonies of some 20,000 regular troops — these were the objects which they sought to attain, and that by means of taxation. It was a policy with which in outline they must have been familiar long before the accession of George III.

The two important acts which it was thought would furnish the necessary revenue were passed entirely without opposition. Whigs and Tories alike supported them. They were not even party measures. The king certainly acted in harmony with the will of the nation when he approved these acts and attempted to execute them. The nation had not been cajoled or coerced into the adoption of this policy. It then seemed natural and proper to all, save here and there an individual. In pursuance of the same object, though resistance in the colonies had revealed the difficulty of attaining it, the Townshend Acts were passed. In the Commons a numerous minority voted against these, but they were passed without difficulty and without the exertion of special influence on the part of the king. The decisive step was now taken. All the subsequent acts of both Parliament and executive were provoked by resistance, and must be judged with immediate reference to that fact. It is certain that, during the years of coercion preceding the war, decisive, if not overwhelming, majorities in Parliament supported the policy of the government, and that the politically active part of the nation, as then constituted, was in harmony with Parliament. The aristocracy, gentry and merchants — and these were the politically active nation — would probably have supported a more vigorous policy than was adopted. The explanation of its failure is to be found in the incapacity of the leaders, rather than in the temper of the classes named. If this view of the case be true, it is difficult to see why the king, during the early and middle periods of the American controversy, was not acting within his constitutional sphere as a constituent part of the British legislature and the imperial executive. In this matter he was not contending against Parliament or seeking to coerce its action.

On this question he and Parliament were in agreement, and there was no occasion for special exertion of royal influence. If the policy was tyrannical, Parliament must bear at least an equal share of the blame: the king should not be singled out and made the special object of attack. The colonies were, in fact, resisting a united king, lords and commons.

But what bearing does this have upon the argument which the colonists at the time drew from Magna Carta, the Petition of Right and the Bill of Rights—an argument of which Professor Tyler, like many other modern writers, makes use? It is said that the colonists might properly appropriate to themselves and use for their special purpose the guaranties contained in those documents. Again and again this claim was made while the controversy was in progress: the changes were rung upon it in every possible form. But the fact was overlooked or obscured that these documents contained guaranties on behalf of the nation against the executive, and not against Parliament. Against the king, when acting as a component of Parliament or when taking proper steps for the execution of its will, they were inoperative. They were the outgrowth of a struggle between the nation and the crown, not of one between the nation and Parliament. They were guaranties of the independence of Parliament as against the crown; and thus they might have been utilized, had George III, in his efforts to reinvigorate the prerogative, come distinctly into conflict with Parliament and the nation. But for the purposes of the colonists—except to arouse popular prejudice—they were useless, because inapplicable. If one accepts the doctrine of virtual representation, this conclusion would seem to be unavoidable. But it also follows directly from the fact that, in the English system since 1689, there is no higher guaranty of rights or expression of power than an act of Parliament. Beyond that or out of reach of it one cannot go. No charter or other expression of the will of the executive can stand against it. Therefore, the fact of the case is that, except in the domain of private rights,—and that only as the result of ancient and well-established

lished precedents, — the colonists had no effective legal guaranties against Parliament.

Parliament, then, and not the king, was to them the real source of danger. It was only when the two were actively coöperating that the colonists had serious reason for fearing the executive authority. For a hundred years they had been living under the government of the British executive, with only occasional, and never genuinely oppressive, interference of Parliament. After 1760 they began to feel the power which was latent in Parliament as the seat of sovereignty within the British Empire, and they sought in various directions for protection against it. They tried to find such security in the charters, of which a few still existed, but these were speedily proved to be insufficient. Very many affirmed that the authority of Parliament was limited — that within certain spheres it could not legislate concerning affairs outside the realm ; but there was no agreement as to where to draw the line, and most of those who adopted this course of argument ended by denying *in toto* the legislative authority of Parliament over the colonies. Many, also, sought refuge in the theory of natural rights. But all these pleas, when viewed from the legal and historical standpoint, are seen to have been unavailing. The colonists stood face to face with a power, possessed of authority over them that was without legal limit, which had now resolved, if possible, to procure from them a revenue. Situated as they were, on a remote continent, under new social and political conditions which were very imperfectly understood, even by the best informed in England, it is clear that there was an element of peril for the colonists in the existing constitutional relations. The danger was inherent in the system itself, whatever might be the character of the personalities who were controlling and directing it. So long as Parliament had not by solemn act limited its power over the colonies, their inhabitants could not feel sure of the permanence of their institutions. Their only sufficient refuge, then, short of successfully achieved independence, was in the action of Parliament itself. Viewed in this light, the American

controversy is seen to have resulted from an effort to find a tolerable solution for a difficult problem in government.

It has been intimated by some that the adoption of the policy by which the full extent of Parliament's authority over the colonies was revealed was an innovation. But in reality all the elements of that policy will be found to have been latent in the system, at least since 1689. It had always been held that the colonies were bound by any act of Parliament in which they were named or which might properly apply to them. Hence the passage of a group of acts like the laws of trade, carried with it the implication that similar laws might be passed binding the colonies in other departments of social or political activity. The existence of the laws of trade also meant that all the resources of the government might be used for their enforcement, and that, if it were thought necessary, Parliament might be resorted to for additional legislation. As a matter of fact, in 1694, on motion of the committee of trade, an order in council was sent to the governors of Maryland and Virginia to cause one or more small armed vessels to cruise along the middle Atlantic coast with power to examine all ships and their clearances on the collectors' books, so as to discover forged certificates. The measure was executed, but it did not stop the direct trade with Scotland and Ireland against which it was directed. To some extent before the revolution of 1689, and regularly thereafter till the colonial revolt, armed vessels were stationed at important points along the American coast for the purpose of capturing pirates, privateers and illegal traders. The law of 1696, by a natural extension of the functions of the admiralty courts in the colonies, provided that violations of the acts of trade should be tried by them; and special judges and other officers were appointed for the purpose. The language of the early charters implied the right of the home government to tax the colonists. The act of trade of 1672 provided for the levy of export duties in the colonies in a certain contingency. The Molasses Act of 1733 provided for the collection of import duties in the northern colonies on sugar, molasses and spirits

brought from foreign plantations; and some revenue was collected under the law, notwithstanding the high rates of duty. The measures thus referred to furnished adequate precedents for the Sugar Act of 1764 and for the order that the vessels of the navy should aid in the work of suppressing contraband trade. The Sugar Act did not mean the adoption of a new policy or the assertion of new claims: it meant, rather, an extension of the old policy, while Parliament had certainly never abandoned its right to secure a revenue from the colonies. Viewed from the standpoint of sovereign authority, of what consequence was it whether an act provided for protection with incidental revenue or revenue with incidental protection?

But, it is argued, when the scope of the imperial revenue system was extended so as to include a stamp duty, and the admiralty courts were given jurisdiction over violations of that law, a radical departure from earlier practice was made. So far as resort to the admiralty courts is concerned, it should be said that they were the only courts in the colonies before which such cases could be brought with the slightest assurance that the cause of the government would be fairly considered. The choice, then, was between the trial of the cases before these courts or their removal to England for trial. Moreover, the laws for the collection of stamp duties in Great Britain provided that violations of the acts should be tried before two justices without a jury. But a larger question here confronts us. What is the historical explanation of the resort to the stamp duty? Was it, as is usually represented, an act of wanton and arbitrary encroachment; or was it the result of existing conditions, and hence susceptible of a rational explanation? Upon the answer made to this question will depend, in the last analysis, the attitude which the historian shall hold toward the charge that the British government was at the time guilty of intentional tyranny toward the colonies.

It is true that the responsible heads of the government which passed the Stamp Act emphatically disclaimed any tyrannical purpose, and gave the colonists ample notice of their intention

to pass the measure and opportunity to suggest other forms of taxation. But undue weight need not be given to these immediate preliminaries. Was there anything in the past history of the relations between Great Britain and her colonies which had convinced those immediately connected with colonial administration that a revenue which should be independent of grant by the assemblies in America was necessary? There was much of that nature, and it will be revealed if the history of the efforts of Great Britain to administer colonial affairs during the period from 1690 to 1760 is ever written. To a large extent the materials for such a history still exist only in manuscript. Some of them, though in fragmentary form, have been printed in the volumes of *Records* issued by a few of the American commonwealths; but these afford only a partial view of the subject. The historian of the American colonies usually treats with considerable fulness the period of settlement; but when he reaches 1690 the current of his narrative is deflected to Canadian affairs, and he devotes himself almost exclusively to the external history of the intercolonial wars. The drudgery which is involved in the reading of manuscript and the study of printed colonial records he avoids, and thus leaves the internal development of the colonies and their relations with England for seventy years almost a total blank. He therefore approaches the consideration of the Stamp Act and of later legislation without preparation, as if nothing had occurred since Andros was driven from Boston.

In reality very much had occurred in the interval, and that of a nature to aid materially in the explanation of the policy adopted by the British government about 1760. In their efforts to administer colonial affairs, imperial officials, whether resident in England or in America, had been contending against many obstacles. These they had encountered when attempting to enforce the acts of trade, to procure money and men with reasonable promptness for defense, to secure permanent and adequate salaries, and in other lines of effort. The struggle which they carried on was incessant; and its history may be read in the dispatches which they sent home

and in the reports and correspondence of the administrative boards which were concerned with colonial affairs. The complaints came not simply from customs officials, like Randolph and Quarry, but from practically all the governors, the best as well as the worst. The obstacles against which they contended were partly physical, partly social and political. The remoteness of the colonies from England, the lack of any easy means of communication within and between the colonies, the sparseness and poverty of their population, created a condition of isolation and inertia which it was very difficult in any degree to overcome. That was accompanied by a spirit of independence — individual, local and colonial — which naturally repelled restraint. Even among the first generation of settlers, there were very few who had had any training in English law or administration or who sympathized to any extent with its spirit; colonists of later generations knew little of it except as an irksome restraint, and were already developing traditions of their own. In New England the spirit of Puritan independence survived in almost its original strength. That feeling was shared by dissenters of the Puritan type wherever they appeared in the colonies. The corporate colony, which in its organization and policy was practically an independent commonwealth, survived in Connecticut and Rhode Island, and formed the substratum of the governmental system of Massachusetts under the second charter. Maryland and Pennsylvania continued as proprietary provinces throughout the entire period. In the corporate colonies and proprietary provinces, as a rule, the only officials appointed by the crown and directly responsible for the maintenance of imperial interests were those connected with the admiralty courts and with the customs administration. All the rest were officials of the special jurisdiction, and, as such, pledged to uphold its interests, often to the ignoring of those of the empire. This was emphatically true of the officials in the corporate colonies, and even Pennsylvania is not free from the charge. The home government had good reason to regard the special jurisdictions, or “proprieties,” as they were called, as obstacles in the way of the

imperial policy, and to desire their abolition. In the growth of large states feudal dependencies have usually been so regarded, and in the progress toward national or imperial unity they have disappeared. The advantage which in this case would come to the imperial cause by the substitution of the royal province for the special jurisdiction would consist in the addition of a royal governor, a council, a surveyor general, a receiver general and an attorney general, to the customs and admiralty officials who, under the king's patents, were already serving in the colony. In each province a complete royal executive system would thus be created, upon which the king could immediately depend for the execution of his will. It is easy, then, to see why, under the pressure of colonial administration, the special jurisdictions tended steadily to disappear and their places to be taken by royal provinces. In the early years of the eighteenth century the plan of recalling all charters by act of Parliament was seriously considered, and that policy had the uninterrupted support of the Board of Trade and of many other officials throughout the century.

There was, however, one obstacle in the way of smooth and unhindered administration which the substitution of royal provinces for special jurisdictions could not remove, and that was the assemblies — the representative element in the provincial legislatures. Through the power which they early obtained over the purse, they were able either to fix the amount of appropriation or to prevent any whatever from being made. Through them the genuine economic weakness of the colonies, their special and real interests, as well as their prejudices, found expression. The existence of assemblies, however necessary they were to the preservation of colonial interests and independence, however naturally and inevitably they found a place in the English system, greatly complicated the problem of imperial administration. The assemblies opposed, hindered, harassed the executives in very many ways and on occasions almost unnumbered. While they were, no doubt, often justified in this attitude, on many occasions their opposition was factious and unreasonable in the extreme. They often pre-

vented, or hindered till they were useless, measures which were undoubtedly wise and advantageous; sometimes, also, they checked corruption and extravagance. Perhaps as often as otherwise the views of the assemblies were narrow, prejudiced and unstatesmanlike. They found it very difficult to think or to act continentally, and the class of men who first sought to awaken broader sympathies among them were the imperial officials. But, in spite of continuous efforts of this kind, the assemblies, even within the royal provinces, continued slowly to encroach upon the executive, till it became clear that they were the strongest element in the system.

Especially serious, under the circumstances, were the obstacles in the way of successful military administration. This involved questions of greater importance, both to the colonists and to Great Britain, than did the commercial system; for, above all things, it was desirable that the colonies should not become subject to the great rival of England. If one would grasp the significance of the colonial wars in this connection, he should study them from the point of view of imperial administration. In the first place, the mother country had been compelled to depend for the aid which she received from the colonies, whether in men or in money, on requisitions. This was, as it always must be, a slow and unsatisfactory method of procuring help: it often failed wholly or in part of its object. When the safety of a colony was not immediately imperilled or its interests involved, vexatious delays usually ensued. Though the resources of many of the colonies were at times heavily taxed for purposes of defense, and though Great Britain sometimes failed to perform the part which she had promised, the system of requisitions was too faulty to be tolerated longer than was necessary. Viewing the matter from the imperial standpoint, the proposal to secure a partial relief from it through the exercise of the power of Parliament would seem to be worthy of fair consideration, if not of approval. The experience we had of the system under the Articles of Confederation would seem at least to make that much clear.

Furthermore, the troops of the colonies, after making proper

allowance for their energy and bravery, for their endurance and their skill as woodsmen, were only militia — levied for short periods, imperfectly trained, officered, armed and provisioned, not fitted for long and distant campaigns or to cope with a regular and veteran soldiery. From the very nature of the case they could never fully emerge from the condition of raw recruits and become obedient by habit. From the correspondence of Washington we obtain abundant information concerning the nature of the Virginia levies, of their discipline and of the commissary department, during the last intercolonial war. From the same source we learn still more in detail the character of the militia during the Revolution and of the provision made for their support. The competent British governors and commanders during the colonial wars held the same opinion concerning these troops, though none of them expressed himself at such length or so forcibly as did the American leader. As Washington during the war for independence desired continental levies, enlistment for long terms of service and a commissary department properly organized and supported, so British officials saw the necessity for the same thing, if they were to cope longer with the French; and they also saw that the colonies could not be depended on to provide these. This was a fair inference from past experience, and it furnished one of the strongest possible arguments for the establishment of a standing force in the colonies. In order fully to appreciate the motives which could induce the British government to resort to imperial taxation, one should study the subject of defense as a problem in administration, and thus bring the history of the intercolonial wars into its proper connection with that of colonial government. He will not proceed far before he will begin to see the immense difficulties with which Great Britain had to cope in its prolonged struggle with France. The weight of the administrative reasons for the maintenance of regular troops in the colonies will become apparent. It will be seen that this was a measure which, under the circumstances, might naturally recommend itself to any well-ordered government. As the probability was very strong that France, as soon as she

was able, would attempt to recover all or a part of what she had lost, it was necessary that careful attention should still be devoted to the subject of defense, and that the years of peace following 1763 should be utilized for inaugurating reform.

Believing that the facts and arguments which we have now hastily reviewed are of such a nature as to have justified, in the minds of men who were acquainted with them, an attempt so to reform the system of colonial administration as to make it more effective for imperial purposes, we now observe that about 1760 the conditions were ripe for such an effort. During the Walpole era the officials in the colonies and many of those at home had from time to time poured their complaints into the ears of the government; but they had met with little response. Walpole was a "Little England" man, and allowed affairs in the dependencies, so far as possible, to take their own course. But during the last intercolonial war there came a reaction. The successes of that conflict caused and were accompanied by a rapid growth of imperialist sentiment in Great Britain. Naturally this was felt first and most strongly in the offices where the work of colonial administration was carried on. The officials at last saw an opportunity for the realization of their ideal — the establishment of a more perfect control over the colonies, in order that imperial interests, particularly in war, trade and finance, might be better guarded, and that the administration might be systematized. Opposition to this had never been expressed by the nation, and now the responsible leaders of the ministries were men who had been trained in the administrative offices and who were therefore committed to the policy. By the triumphs of the last war the foundations of a maritime empire seemed to have been permanently laid; and a corresponding awakening of interest in the navy, the colonies, commerce and defense was felt throughout the nation. During the war there had been greater activity in colonial administration than at any time since the reign of William III. The enthusiasm aroused by the victories of Wolfe and Clive was at its height when George III came to the throne, and he could hardly fail to sympathize with the imperialist ten-

dencies of the time. With king, ministry and nation under the influence of this sentiment, it would have been strange if some effort had not been made to strengthen the bonds which united the dependencies to the mother country. As there was no thought of changing the nature of the colonial system, and as the official mind never contemplated the possibility of serious opposition, the procuring of a revenue by Parliamentary taxation was necessarily regarded as the first step to be taken, after which the other reforms could be carried into execution without serious hindrance from the assemblies. Professor Tyler himself admits (I, 313) that clear-headed and honest-minded Americans might at the time have held the opinion, as they did, that the British king and Parliament could be trusted to carry through this policy without imperilling the essential political privileges of the colonists.

If now we return to the Declaration of Independence, we find that it wholly ignores the imperialist point of view, and that in it no attempt is made to account rationally or historically for the conduct of the British government. By this I mean that the events and causes which probably led to the course which the government adopted are not referred to at all. Instead, a certain number of the acts of that government are taken out of their historic setting, are charged with being usurpations and are explained on the hypothesis of a design to place the colonists under an absolute despotism. The history of the reign since its beginning is said to reveal a settled purpose to establish "an absolute tyranny over these states." The articles in this indictment are taken largely from the history of Massachusetts since 1767. It is not stated that the most offensive acts of the British government, thus referred to, formed no part of its original intent or policy, but were occasioned by the resistance and disorder which had developed in that and other colonies. Many of the acts referred to would have been perfectly constitutional in peaceful times, and some of them the imperial government was constantly performing. But in the Declaration they are all classed together as tyrannical and despotic. Hutchinson's third volume, however, shows that

in the main they are capable of a different explanation; and if the account which it contains of the controversy in Massachusetts approximates to the truth — as Professor Tyler intimates, and as the original authorities prove — it will be difficult to substantiate the charges made in the Declaration. The account given of those events by Hutchinson, and the view concerning them which one must form from a dispassionate study of the contemporary documents, cannot be harmonized with the theory of their origin which is given in the Declaration. If the one be true, the other must be essentially false. But the evidence of the tyranny of the British government must be found, if found at all, in its treatment of Massachusetts between 1767 and the beginning of the war. Moreover, he who seeks for it must do so with a full knowledge of the rights of Parliament, of the objects which the British government had been seeking in and through the colonies for generations and of the rights of the executive in the royal province. The problem in Massachusetts, as elsewhere, must be viewed not alone from the colonial, but as well from the imperial standpoint, and especially with an understanding of what the old British colonial system really was. That will not be possible until the early eighteenth century shall be studied much more thoroughly than it ever has been. Equal attention and care should be bestowed on the internal development of the colonies, on their institutions and their political conflicts, particularly on the social and political tendencies within them toward independence. It will then be seen that our early history had an imperial or British side, as well as a colonial or American side—that for two centuries the course we took was the resultant of forces coming from both these directions. But by far the strongest forces to which our ancestors were subjected were those of the New World. The consideration of these will lead the student to give due weight to colonial interests and demands; but, if he is loyal to truth, it must be in a spirit very different from the fervid radicalism of Jefferson.

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